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ABSTRACT

This plan is intended to stimulate action to end homelessness in Philadelphia by 2010. Based on local and national research on homelessness, it examines how to achieve this goal, highlighting advocacy, information, services, housing, jobs, communications, accountability, and resources. Research indicates that many dedicated people are working on ending homelessness; active federal participation has had disappointing results; each unique community must custom-design its solution; and proper sequencing of strategies is important. The plan highlights 30 issues, including ending, not managing, homelessness; housing first, rehabilitation second; accountability is essential; employment is necessary in building stability; a plan to end homelessness must have timetables, systems, and resources; and homelessness devastates children. The plan emphasizes creating independent living situations for homeless people. Eight essential components of the 2010 plan are community commitment to change, information, inclusion, housing, employment, awareness, accountability, and prevention. Ten action steps toward the goal of ending homelessness by 2010 include: convene a summit session of key leaders; create a database on homelessness issues; form a task force to establish an end-of-homelessness strategy with the state and federal government; and form a financial oversight committee with more than advisory responsibilities. (SM)

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ED 463 347

Opening the Door

to let the future in

The 2010 Plan for rallying our resources in support of solving the shame of homelessness in America.

This is a conscience-rattling examination of our *obligations*, our *opportunities* and our *options*.

Prepared by
The Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness.

** Reality makes this report necessary.*
**The Albert M. Greenfield Foundation makes it possible.*

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P. Ryan
Philadelphia Com. to End Homelessness

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"When I became homeless over 11 years ago, I saw and experienced the harsh realities of being homeless – it was so heart wrenching that I knew I had to do something to make a difference. Today, my greatest contribution is being a part of working towards its elimination."

Roosevelt Darby, Jr.,
Deputy Director,
Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness

As we turned down the homestretch to finish this plan, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 made us temporarily forget which way we were going. Sheila Crowley's observations of that terrible day speak eloquently for our mission:

"What I felt most of all on Tuesday was the need to be home... I wanted sanctuary in a place that was completely familiar and over which I had control – home."

As she left for home that afternoon, she noted that the only people left on the DC streets *"were standing about with their bags and bundles with nowhere to go... How could anyone possibly cope last Tuesday without a* ***home to go home to****?"*

If You're in a hurry, fast-forward to page 26.

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Dignity and Duty

Make no mistake — this plan is about the ***dignity*** of human beings and the duty of a community.

By setting a goal to end homelessness in Philadelphia, we defined the gap between where we are and where we want to be as a civilized society. It is a goal that is within the comfort zone of our capabilities.

At the heart of this initiative are fundamental values for the individual.

THAT each should be able to live his/her life proud of who they are and aware of what they can become.

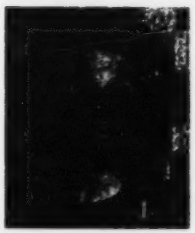
THAT each be able to work at what they do best, developing a sense of self reliance.

THAT each has access to dependable housing, and education and health delivery systems they can count on.

THAT each can live in harmony with their neighbors exercising both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

There are those who say that 'ending homelessness' is a race without a finish line. We suggest such doubters have a splendid talent for surrender. What's required is a solution strategy that is designed with precision and developed with purpose. This plan challenges us to make that commitment.

Uncertainty is our opponent. Overcoming it is our mission.



Phyllis R. Ryan,
Executive Director

Roosevelt Darby, Jr.,
Deputy Director

Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness

In Preparing This Plan,

We Listened Carefully

- to trained outreach teams — dedicated individuals who daily build trust among those who experience homelessness in order to (a) match up needs with services, and (b) gather information to develop effective answers so that we can bring a once-and-for-all end to homelessness.
- to what's going on around the United States — in New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, Minnesota, California and elsewhere — wherever people of commitment are seeking solutions.
- to analyses made by government bodies, scholars, foundations and community groups.
- to the words and wisdom of social service agencies that understand the focus this problem requires, but also the frustration that is built into it.
- to the people who suffer the most — those who are down to their last dream — in the street, without shelter, without jobs, without resources, without options.
- to two decades of our own experience at Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness (PCH) in trying to escalate awareness of the causes of homelessness.

We Also Listened Painfully...

- to too many concessions that homelessness is a normal and natural condition of American life — get used to it!
- to too many sad stories suggesting that the millions of dollars aimed at turning back the tide of homelessness have only served to 'manage the problem' instead of solving it.
- to too many people who prefer to postpone tomorrow rather than prepare for it.

A Dozen Lessons Learned

1. Homelessness has been permitted to become 'unimportant' again, to slide lower and lower on the public agenda. A disturbing acceptance has set in. Apathy. A look-the-other-way capitulation to 'inevitability.'

2. Stable housing is the answer. Its cost the problem. A 'Housing First' mentality requires unprecedented determination and creative cooperation throughout the entire community.

3. The problems of people experiencing homelessness, beyond their housing status, are not different from those of other low-income people.

4. 'Ending homelessness' has a better chance when we don't isolate the condition from mainstream services — when we stop treating it as a social disease exiled to an island of its own.

5. Employment — getting a job and keeping it — is a turning point factor in ending and preventing homelessness as a way of life.

6. Badly needed: information — data that we can rely on (how many, where, what age, what background).

7. We have an abundance of analysis. What's needed now is ACTION — leadership, a strategy with no clutter, no cobwebs, no bureaucratic barbed wire.

8. Accountability for all stakeholders must be built into the solution.

9. The media is needed to make this issue 'important again.'

10. All people, whatever their problems, can deal more effectively with life if they have the stability of affordable housing.

11. Philadelphia has the resources to end this disgrace.

12. What's needed is the resolve. Blended with The Mayor's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, the opportunity to end homelessness has never been brighter.

"The public will to end homelessness will not materialize if the homeless system and advocacy system collude in the institutionalization of homelessness."

Sheila Crowley
National Low Income Housing Coalition

How To Read This Report

The Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness has set a goal that lives up to the organization's name. The goal is to *end* homelessness. Not to 'make progress'. Not to 'deal with it'. But to ***END*** it. *By 2010.*

Because we believe in the value of information so that solution choices are based on reality, we pursued both geography and history in preparing this report. Finding out what's happening in other parts of the nation, plus determining what's worked and what hasn't over the years, has added immeasurably to the growing fund of PCH's own experience.

At the top of our agenda was always the search for an enduring solution, not just the assembly of information.

So, This Plan is Intended

To Stimulate Action... Not To Prolong Analysis*

What you're reading right now is ACTION oriented. It hits the highlights of our research and communicates what must be done to achieve our 'end homelessness' goal.

It is an easy read. To the point.

In it you'll find coverage of key issues:

- Advocacy
- Information
- Services
- Housing
- Jobs
- Communications
- Accountability
- Resources

*Analysis, including a deeper exploration of data discovered and a more detailed evaluation of options developed from our contact with 160 sources, will be the subject of future PCH documents and activities.

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Trial and Error...

A 20-Year Learning Curve

The intentions were good. No question about that. At the peak of concern about the problem of homelessness in the mid 80s, along came the timely passage of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

What was acclaimed by politicians as the way to "meet critically urgent needs of homeless people in the nation" didn't turn out to be that at all. In the public and political mindset, this 'throw-money-at-it' legislation should have ended the problem. Quite the opposite. Instead, it began to drain attention from the issue of homelessness while still retaining the problem. And at a sizeable pricetag.

Wrote James Wright in the 1998 book Beside the Golden Door: Policy, Politics and the Homeless: *"Political and public attention began to fade after McKinney-Vento... the nearly total fade-out of interest has been striking ...."*

The media took it off of Page One. Public officials crafted bureaucracies to funnel federal funding. The public walked around people sleeping on grates and hurried on to their own agendas.

Now We're In a New Century...

Systems intended to help those experiencing homelessness have too often become irrelevant and drifted far from the needs and wants of the very people they are commissioned to help. Habits develop. We spin our wheels. We forget that by continuing to do what we did yesterday, it will block our view of a better tomorrow.

Many organizations and individuals are to be complimented for sincere attempts to improve human lives. TRIAL AND ERROR is okay if we learn something from it — if in finding out what doesn't work, we can discover what does.

What have we learned? People who are without a home are like the rest of us. They are white. They are black. Male. Female. Young. Not-so-young. Some are bright. Some abuse alcohol and drugs. They come in all sizes and shapes, like the rest of us. There are only two things they have in common:

THEY ARE POOR AND THEY ARE WITHOUT A HOME.

"Every study that has looked has found that affordable... housing, prevents homelessness more effectively than anything else."

Marybeth Shinn and Jim Baumohl
Symposium on Homelessness Research, 1999

Finding Out What Others Know

The Shinn/Baumohl simplification of the solution turned out to be an echo of many of the interviews we did and the research we compiled.

As you will see in the next couple of pages, we seem NOT YET to have learned that our ability to end homelessness depends upon our willingness to 'screen it into' our mainstream social systems, not to *screen it out*.

As far back as 1994 the Federal Plan to End Homelessness sounded the warning:

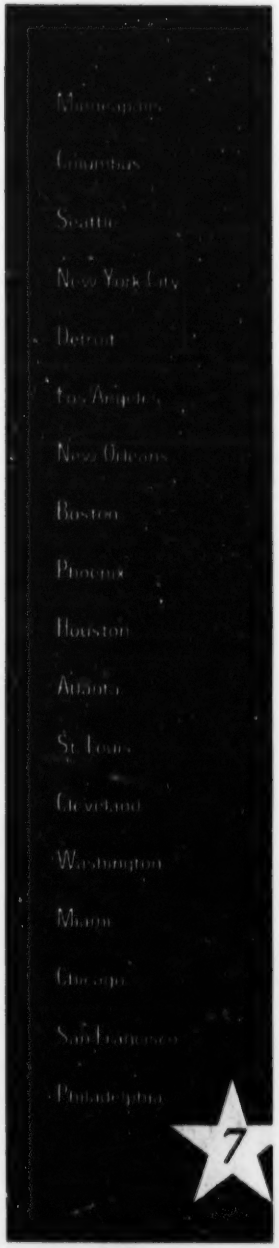
> *"It profits us nothing as a nation to wall off homelessness as a novel social problem made up of a distinctly 'different' population. Nor is it something that requires separate and distinctive mechanisms of redress, isolated from mainstream programs. In fact, the more we understand about the root causes of homelessness, the greater our sense of having been here before."*

That caution against type-casting homelessness as a one-of-a-kind dilemma came almost a decade ago.

DID ANYONE LISTEN?

Who We Listened To — and why

- A Los Angeles group, Beyond Shelter, developed the 'Housing First' approach for homeless families over a decade ago. The pattern of services usually provided in transitional housing — initially intensive and phased downward over time — are supplied ***AFTER*** people have secured their own place. The goal is to link the people to community based and mainstream services. After five years, 85% are still in their own place.
- A New York group, Pathways to Housing, established a 'Housing First' program for street-dwelling homeless individuals with severe psychiatric problems and often drug/alcohol addictions. Individuals are assisted in obtaining their own apartments. The program handles the rent payments, and they are required to check in with a staff person twice a month. All other choices about their lives are up to them. Success rate over three year's time: 88%.
- In Colorado, Minnesota and Massachusetts transitional housing units 'convert' to permanent housing. Families and individuals are not to required to move after a transitional program is completed. This strengthens stability for the family and directs financial resources toward more permanent structures.
- In Minneapolis, the Hennepin county welfare office works with private service agencies in the Rapid Exit program to quickly move families out of shelters and into permanent housing within weeks. The agencies provide ongoing support and assistance to build stability.
- In Columbus, the Community Shelter Board was founded to coordinate community-wide, comprehensive planning to develop solutions to homelessness. They knew that information was an essential planning tool and established a data system. Today, all of their policy decisions are founded on hard information about the dimensions and needs of the homeless population.
- In New York City, the Doe Fund's Ready, Willing & Able employment based shelter program has attracted national attention with its success in assisting homeless men secure housing and personal stability through employment. Success rate three years after completing the program: 85%.



Who We Listened to — and why (continued)

- Some states — Massachusetts, Illinois, Minnesota, California — have invested in homelessness prevention programs along with commitments to develop and support affordable housing.
- Early decisions by the founders of Elim Transitional Services in Minneapolis avoided creation of separate systems. They chose not to provide services duplicating those in mainstream systems. They chose also to assist individuals and families to relocate quickly into permanent housing in communities. Their view: "Housing is permanent. Services are transitional."
- Beyond Shelter in Los Angeles, CommonBond Communities in St. Paul, and HELP in Brooklyn have each developed 'service enriched' housing models which are often more 'community enriching'. They provide ongoing community based information and resources to deal with day-to-day problems.
- The national organization, Corporation for Supportive Housing, promotes development of housing-plus-services for the population termed 'chronically homeless' who are estimated to be about 20% of the homeless population. Through technical assistance, they aid programs and jurisdictions to develop supportive housing.
- The collective wisdom of a policy retreat on ending family homelessness in California was recorded by San Francisco's HomeBase. Included: 'settlement houses' where all people can get one-stop, community-based services. Each community center should provide comprehensive services, doing as much as they can to help neighborhood people. "*These center must truly provide access to services, not just a place where people get information and referrals.*"

Particularly notable is that most of the success stories encountered in other cities have a 'Housing First' foundation. Programs that work do not require that the organization dealing with homeless persons/families also must provide the complex array of resources and services needed. *When the first priority is 'permanent' shelter, the results are nearly always positive.*

What We Wanted To Know From Others

Do they struggle with the concept of homelessness as a separate entity, somehow isolated into a special category of the poor?

Answer: Some do. Some don't.

Do they suffer from a lack of real information on the demographics of their homelessness problem?

Answer: Most cases, yes.

Is the amount of federal funds coming into their community to deal with homelessness adequate?

Answer: Universal response. No.

Do they know if their programs are effective?

Answer: All say 'yes', but the problem goes on.

Are lines of responsibility in their communities clearly drawn?

Answer: Seldom.

It Came Across Clearly:

That some very dedicated people are working hard to find 'something that works' in hopes of ending homelessness.

That active federal participation in the issue has provided financial resources, but disappointing results.

That each community has its own uniqueness and therefore must custom design its solution to embrace all local factors.

That the right sequencing is important — first, housing; then, other services to follow from people and agencies best equipped to provide them.

The Messages (in ten words or less)

Thirty findings

-- From other cities

-- From our research

-- From our own Philadelphia experience.

All of which are helpful in building PCH's

2010 Plan to end homelessness in Philadelphia . . .

. . . and in doing so, to provide a 'best practice'
for replication around the nation.

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1 Ending, not managing, homelessness is the goal of choice.

2 'Housing First', rehabilitation second is the right sequence.

3 Decision-making without good data is folly.

4 Absence of accountability equals dollars down the drain.

5 Employment is the companion of housing in building stability.

6 Too much governmental oversight can emphasize paperwork over productivity.

7 Perpetuity over performance tempts some homeless organizations.

8 Prevention of future homelessness parallels focus on current solutions.

9 Human service workers are overburdened and under supported.

10 Anecdotal stories can illuminate but are not guiding lights.

11 Strategies work better with input from homeless people themselves.

12 A massive mismatch exists between income and housing costs.

13 Linkages with mainstream services are spotty for homeless people.

14 The businesses community is often absent from strategic planning sessions.

15 The media is unexcited about the issue.

16 Most politicians 'view with alarm' but prefer to count votes.

11

12

17 An inventory of livable housing is elusive to assemble.

18 Success too often measured by dollars acquired, not people housed.

19 Homeless people grew up in neighborhoods, can become neighbors again.

20 A plan to END HOMELESSNESS must have timetables, systems, resources.

21 A renewed alliance between public and private sectors is essential.

22 Public support for homeowners dwarfs public support for renters.

23 A 'housing wage' in Philadelphia is $14.52 an hour.

24 Homelessness is devastating on children.

25 Zero-based thinking is necessary to exit 'homelessness business.'

26 Homelessness for older Americans is prevented by a safety net.

27 Prevention belongs in a comprehensive, one-stop community-based setting.

28 No reason to believe problems of Philadelphians can't be solved.

29 If we can build a Performing Arts Center...

30 If we can stage a "WelcomeAmerica" celebration...

INTRODUCING... The 2010 Plan

The Philadelphia Committee to END Homelessness

Believes in its mission.

To carry it out, PCH has developed:

THE 2010 PLAN

... so named because, properly conducted, it can achieve full success by the year 2010.

There will be nothing small about this plan.

It will require widespread community cooperation;

An acceptance of responsibility; an effective use of

financial resources; and a refuse to lose optimism that

Philadelphia can be the first in the nation to eliminate

homelessness.

"We have built a homeless service industry, and it now has its own entrenched interests and expectations for continued funding. This homeless establishment, in the absence of new resources, actually reduces the likelihood that new or creative approaches to ending rather than ameliorating homelessness will be developed or implemented... We need to think in a new way about what we are doing."

Martha Burt,
Helping America's Homeless

The ultimate goal is to put homeless advocates, service providers, advocates and researchers right out of business. And it is a rare organization indeed that can summon the courage to destroy its own reason for being.

James Wright

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The NEW "Philadelphia Story"

Sobered by the problems encountered by most major cities; matured by years of trying to change the plight of homeless individuals and families; and encouraged by The Mayor's commitment to revitalize neighborhoods; Philadelphia has a turning point opportunity to become a model jurisdiction on how to end homelessness.

Philadelphia has a lot going for it:

- Caring citizens whose compassion extends beyond boundaries.
- A unique municipal commitment.
- Experienced service providers.
- An academic community of skills and knowledge.
- A business presence willing to be mobilized behind the right idea.

Unity of purpose beckons. It is the key that opens the door and lets the future in. Each party setting aside any agenda of its own and unselfishly enlisting to end homelessness — knowing that when it happens, all parts of the community will benefit.

The PCH 2010 Plan in the pages ahead puts the emphasis where it has to be — on creating independent living situations for the homeless population.

The concept of 'Housing First' is a change in Philadelphia thinking. It awaits our cooperation and common sense in helping return people to our communities as good neighbors, wage earners, taxpayers and involved citizens.

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From the National Alliance to End Homelessness:

"The current orientation is to keep people in the system for long periods of time either because there is no place to go... or because it is assumed that people are homeless because of some set of personal problems that can be fixed by the homeless system. To end homelessness, a different approach must be taken. People should be placed in housing as rapidly as possible and then linked to available services."

The PCH 2010 Plan

To end homelessness in Philadelphia by the Year 2010.

Change

Information

Inclusion

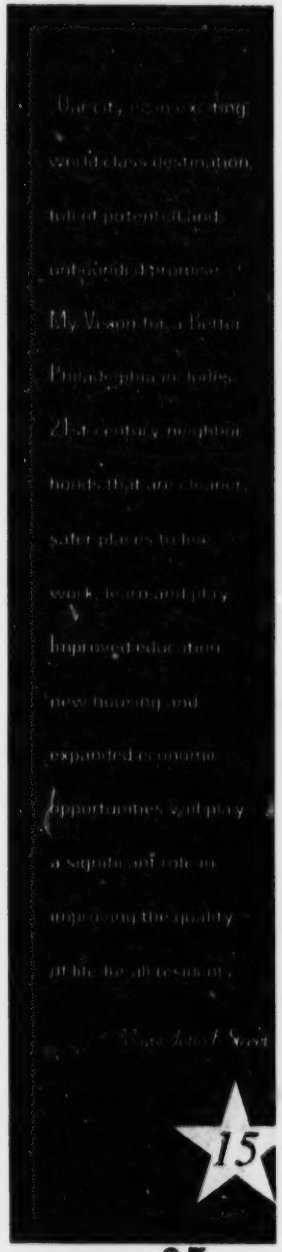
Housing

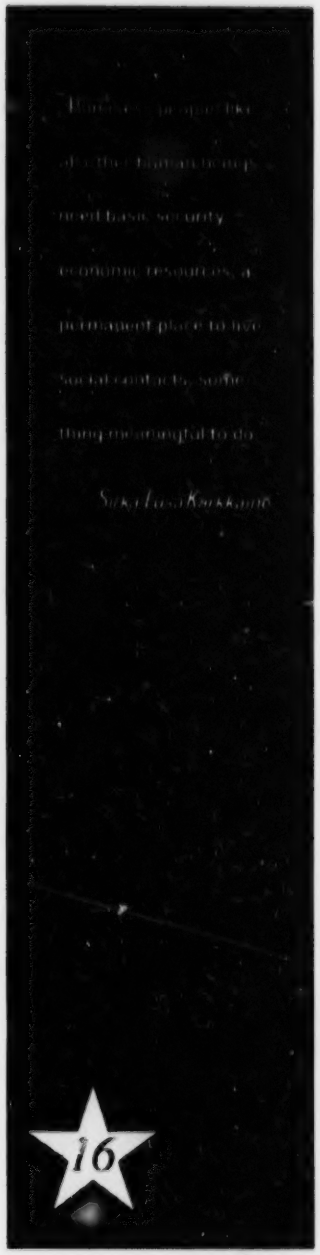
Employment

Awareness

Accountability

Prevention





What Must Happen

CHANGE — Like an Olympic synchronized swim team, homeless stakeholders must practice together. If we are to give up what's good to go for what's GREAT, we need to welcome 'change' as an ally, not see it as an adversary. That won't be easy to do. Old boomerangs are hard to throw away.

INFORMATION — No strategic plan worth its weight in five year projections can have credibility without accurate data. Allocating millions of dollars without a statistical sense of direction will prolong homelessness, not end it.

INCLUSION — The homeless poor, like the rest of the low income population, need to be 'screened into' mainstream delivery systems so that a successful end-homelessness plan can focus first on housing, not on human services. They come later.

HOUSING — This is the core of the recommendation this report advances. It's a definition of mission. If we want to end homelessness, then we need to get the homeless into housing that they know will be there for them. That's where our mindset needs to be.

EMPLOYMENT — Not an identical twin of 'housing', but almost. Getting a job that will pay a 'housing wage' to self-sustain his or her own place is a principal prevent defense against return to the street.

AWARENESS — To re-energize public interest in ending homelessness, an ambitious communications program is required. This must include the media, schools, houses of worship, the chambers of commerce, governmental agencies. Message: like a political convention; like two sports stadia; this, too, has an end-date — and it can be done.

ACCOUNTABILITY — The 2010 PLAN needs a public report card, where our progress can be tracked quarterly. How many people housed? At what cost? Through what kind of community cooperation? How close to the end?

PREVENTION — Once homelessness has been ended, what system is in place to prevent those that are housed from going back to the street, and new candidates for homelessness from *ever going there*. All of our efforts will be wasted if we don't stop the flow into shelters and to the street — through creative, community-based intervention and support.

Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Community Commitment to Change

- The traditional emphasis on outreach, shelter, transitional housing, case management, is part of the 'maintenance managing' philosophy of dealing with homeless people. Philadelphia now needs to endorse a new policy of 'permanence' in its approach to housing. Otherwise homeless people will continue to be filed away in manilla folder.

- Instead of protecting their own particular part of the services to homeless people, each agency must look through other end of the telescope and see a larger purpose where 'sharing' responsibility with other service groups becomes part of their work style. Guarding one's own turf merely perpetuates the problem.

- The segregated homeless system must be replaced by a community based approach that doesn't label the homeless as 'different' from others who are poor. The same integrated services should flow to both homeless and housed people to promote housing stability.

- The final change needed is the adoption of a take charge attitude among community and business leaders. This is a solvable problem, a story to which real leaders can write a happy ending.

Having your own data eliminates for all time myths about the extent of the problem and focuses attention on what to do about it

Martin Burt

Because homeless people in some cities come mainly from a few areas of highly concentrated poverty, it makes sense to test strategies of community development that combine housing development and subsidy market-based economic development supported work public employment and social services

Mary Ellen Sloane and Lee Bowman

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Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Information

High Speed, High Tech, High Intensity

- Installation of a state-of-the-art system for gathering, packaging and delivering demographic information and for tracking individuals and families from placement through aftercare. Management systems exist that can set the baseline in the formation of plans and policies to END homelessness.

- Move such a system to the top of the funding list in the utilization of available dollars. Its value simply in terms of providing a clearinghouse on what works and what doesn't will be a borderline breakthrough. Do this and Philadelphia will be smarter, faster, more cost-effective.

- The highly regarded Children's Defense Fund in a 2001 legislative proposal added its push for dependable data: *"There is a lack of basic information on the well being of children and families, information that can help guide policy makers and the public in responding to problems."*

- A sound data base sends a modern message to potential funders, a signal that our homeless initiative is a distinct cut above the crowd.

- Maintenance of this system requires monitoring, updating & upholding second-to-none standards of content and grounded by essential multi-year funding commitments.

Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Inclusion

Matching Up With Mainstream Services, Community Based Services

- "Two words describe Philadelphia's homeless policies over past 20 years: *redundant* and *costly*. Toss in a third–*unproductive*, also. Because we have isolated homeless people into a special identity, we have created a set of services identical to those already on the shelf through mainstream health and human services systems. It's not a cause for finger pointing. It's nobody's fault. But if it continues, it will be.

- Community based access to needed mainstream resources can assure that *all* low income people (not just homeless persons) have access to services that keep them stabilized in their housing.

- Temporary housing (emergency and transitional) needs to be integrated into the appropriate health or human services system. That permits 'housing initiative' to concentrate on solving the problem of finding stable, enduring, livable and affordable housing instead of exhausting its financial and emotional resources on services already available elsewhere.

- Housing would be integrated into other key decisions such as employment, transportation, healthcare, child care and other services.

- If 'Housing First' is the giant step forward in ending homelessness, and we believe it is, then a revamping of who does what would add speed, simplicity, style and substance to all the good intentions now present.

Having a separate homeless service system for homeless people institutionalizes homelessness and diminishes the will and capacity of the mainstream systems to help the homeless population.

Center for Community Change

The homeless system is not large and well funded. It can meet immediate needs, but it cannot address their fundamental need for housing, income and services. Only the mainstream system has the resources to do that."

National Alliance to End Homelessness

The conventional wisdom is that homeless families need to become rehabilitated before they can be housed. Our findings show that if given the housing first, homeless families will become stable and remain stable.

Marybeth Shinn
NY Times 1998

If our goal is only to repair defective souls, housing need not concern us very much. If, on the other hand, our aim is to get out of the condition of homelessness as rapidly as possible, then housing must come above all other things.

James Wright

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Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

A House To Live In

- The 'Housing First' concept which is picking up momentum around the country reverses the approach which was imposed by the federal government in the mid-90s. The government's "continuum of care" structure put homeless people through a qualification process (about two years long) before they could move from transitional housing to permanent quarters. Under 'Housing First' the automatic 'test period' is eliminated. Homeless person/family are moved as quickly as possible to permanent housing where they are connected with needed services and resources as deemed necessary.

- Advantages: (a) experience shows that having a place to go to tends to make the individual stronger in terms of other elements of self reliance (Beyond Shelter's 85% success rate after 5 years and Pathways to Housing's 88% success rate) and (b) financial resources can be directed to permanent housing instead of temporary quarters.

- *Housing is at the core of family stability* say researchers Rachel Bratt and Langley Keyes. After an extended learning curve, the idea is catching on with advocates for the homeless. It works.

- While other systems understandably have developed half way programs (transitional housing), the condition of homelessness does not require such a transition; persons needing support from those other systems may receive temporary housing if it is needed, but not solely because a person or family is homeless.

Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Employment

A Job To Go To

- First of all, they WANT to work! Homeless people told the producers of the most extensive national study ever conducted, that what they needed most was a job. Few are incapable of some level of employment; options ranging from 'sheltered workshop' to 'enlightened' day labor, to full time jobs – all of which should be available.

- Housing is impossible without earned income. Subsidies help for a time, but finding living quarters for a homeless person/family needs to be closely followed by the opportunity to work at a pay level that will provide income sufficient so that the individual can meet the rental or mortgage payments – a 'housing wage'.

- As founders of the highly successful Ready Willing and Able program state simply, *"Work works."*

- In PCH's 2010 Plan, if housing is first on the short list of requirements, then employment is right behind in a very close second place.

- What makes the employment emphasis such a high profile item for ending homelessness is the preventive factor. Long term housing stability depends on the ability to earn enough money to afford housing in the private sector. Employment is the best antidote to homelessness.

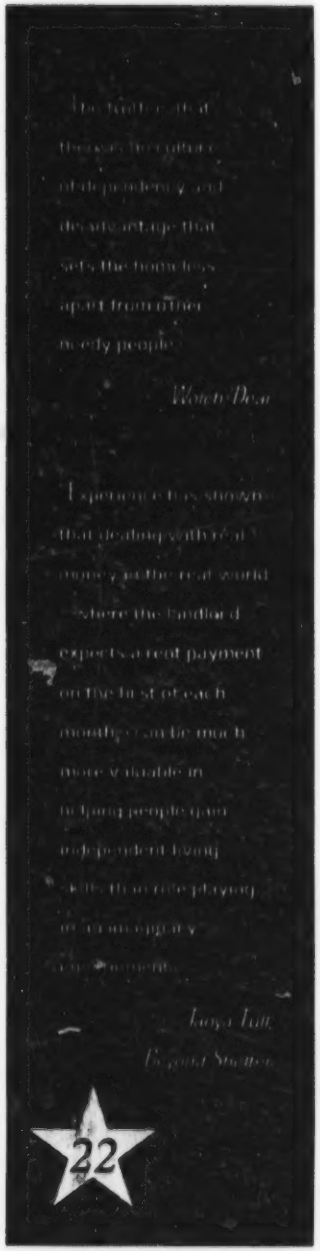
- A researcher evaluating whether homeless individuals had difficulty accessing mainstream employment assistance programs reported that they did, indeed, have some difficulties in making such a connection, but that, in the end, it didn't matter too much because the programs were ineffective. Building self reliance through a job-of-their-own will bypass this difficulty.

What people do during the day matters as much as what they do at night. Policies that operate only in the housing market, and not in the labor market are clearly inadequate.

Brendan O'Flaherty

"If there is one recommendation on the street today, it is for decent work."

Kim Hopper and Jim Baumohl



Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Awareness

Making the 'End of Homelessness' Important Again

- In the 80's, television and print media brought high visibility attention to homelessness. People in big cities could see the condition first hand on the streets. Editorials, political speeches and statements from pulpits agreed that in the world's most prosperous country, this was a humiliating message to put on the nightly news.

- Now it's the 21st Century. Reality cannot be changed just by ignoring it. The homeless problem is as severe as it was 20 years ago. What's diminished is public awareness. It's no longer important in the hurry-up world of today.

- Making it important again — to business, to government, to clergy, to the media — must be a part of our plan to end homelessness. A massive communication effort will be a part of the total strategy, and will convey in clear terms that (a) it can be done, and (b) it is worth it to our city and our conscience to get it done.

Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Accountability

Grading Our Report Card

- In two decades of initiatives involving the homeless population, millions and millions of dollars were spent in Philadelphia. During that time there is evidence that only one program was independently evaluated. This has led to an infatuation with the status quo, doing what we did last year while forgetting that the people last year did what they did the year before.

- Any serious plan to end homelessness must include periodic evaluations by independent researchers so that amendments to the strategic plan can take advantage of new opportunities and up to date information. A whole industry has grown up around the problem of homelessness and the irony is that a lot of people with good homes are paying their mortgages from funds earned trying to help those without homes.

- New measurements for success need definition. 'Sucess' in the homeless service system is too often put in terms of funds raised, not people housed. Those new standards need to be evaluating performance in issues like problems solved, return on investment, accurate data.

- Without independent evaluation, no value fs placed on the hard work done day after-day by the workers in the trenches of the homeless system, much less on the investment by funders, both public and private.

- Reality time: claims of superior quality of services to Philadelphia's homeless are unproven. In a professional atmosphere such claims must finally be examined, goals must be actually reached, and performance must be graded in the full glow of accountability sunshine.

People often ask me how I respond to homeless people. They are people without homes.

Stuart McAllister

I don't believe that it's true that the poor will always be with us. I think that kind of public tolerance is just an excuse for keeping things the way they are.

Margaret Cuca Kingsley

Eight Essential Components of the 2010 Plan

Prevention

Once Ended, Never Again

- Many people who unselfishly work hard each day to ease the problems of the homeless find themselves in a cycle that parallels the dilemma of the very people they are trying to help. They can't get out of the 'homeless business'. Part of what keeps them there is dedication. And part is the hope that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, if the bureaucracy itself doesn't add any more tunnel.

- PREVENTION, that element of the PCH 2010 Plan that intercepts people who find themselves headed for homelessness – must be frontloaded with the ability to anticipate problems and stop them before they start.

- Because University of Pennsylvania researchers led by Dennis Culhane have shown us that we can identify the areas of the city from which homeless persons and families originate, we can target and tailor community based services in those communities.

- Mainstream systems of health and human services can be firmly linked with community based services. That means a vigilant communication system that quickly channels people in need to the right place where they are going to get the right information and productive follow through.

- That also means an exceptional system of coordination must be built into the plan, so that government, non-profit groups, evaluation teams, business allies and community groups are working in harmony to keep the cases manageable. It is better to deal with a few at a time rather than trying to change the worlds of hundreds, even thousands, as we are now.

What Have We Said So Far?

THAT the problems of homeless people, beyond their housing status, are not different from those of other low-income people.

THAT services provided in the homeless system duplicate mainstream system services. Such a separate and segregated arrangement is inefficient, ineffective and expensive.

THAT the best way to end homelessness is through the provision of housing, from where people, whatever their problems, can deal more effectively with life's challenges.

THAT a strategic plan to end homelessness needs:

- To emphasize the importance of employment
- To include thorough and accurate information as the basis for program design, investment and evaluation
- To link up all people to appropriate community-based programs
- To include accountability measures in all phases and aspects of services to all low income people.

THAT all this begins with a renewal of public interest and a uniting of the city's leaders behind a well-directed, well-founded, solidly-based campaign to END homelessness as it now exists, and to PREVENT it in the future.

What Happens Next?

Ten Action steps that will propel Philadelphia toward the goal of ending homelessness by the Year 2010

Step #1

Convene a summit session of key leaders -- government, business, clergy, education, community. Twin goals: (a) To publicly buy into the belief that homelessness CAN be ENDED, and (b) to assign creative responsibility to eight strategic study groups (change, information, inclusion, housing, employment, awareness, accountability, prevention) with their contributions to the strategic plan due in 60 days at a second session of this summit group.

Step #2

In tune with the agreed-upon strategic plan, the city conducts an inventory of all current and potential permanent housing resources available for the END HOMELESSNESS program.

Timing: Report due in three months.

Step #3

Concurrent with housing inventory a task force of academic, research and philanthropic partners produces a system of data collection and application that gives Philadelphia the finest information base in America on all aspects of the homelessness issue.

Timing: Group selected out of second meeting of summit.

System designed, funded and in place six months later.

Step #4

Coordinated with the city's inventory study, an action alliance of community and business leaders examines all factors of a 'Housing First' program, delivering a plan, timetable, costs, responsibility assignment. This group should be a mixture of in-the-trenches community group leaders and business-oriented project managers who are accustomed to taking on large goals and meeting deadlines.

Timing: Plan delivered in six months.

Step #5

Zero-based thinking group, emerging from second summit session, creates a new blending of mainstream delivery systems for preventing and ending homelessness within a community based framework. This breaks new ground in the integration of such services and requires new dimensions of compromise and cooperation. It is a first-in-the-nation prototype.

Timing: Proposal completed in one year.

Step #6

Task force formed to establish 'end of homelessness' strategy with state and federal government. Analysis of what help, financial and otherwise, will be needed and for how long. (Remember, under PCH's 2010 Plan, homelessness in Philadelphia has an END date, beyond which funding and administration is no longer needed, and services fold into mainstream systems.)

Timing: Recommendations due in nine months.

Step #7

Establish a clearinghouse for Communications, initially created by a task force of six people, keenly skilled in rousing public awareness. The Clearinghouse operates until 2010, keeping the public focus NOT on homelessness, but on ENDING homelessness. This is an operation that generates story ideas, photo ops, billboards, seminars, volunteers groups, VIP visits.

Timing: Structural recommendations due in nine months.

Step #8

Form a financial oversight committee with more than advisory responsibilities. Made up of leading banking, philanthropy and financial officials, this group defines where it can be helpful in planning, auditing, pursuing unconventional funding.

Timing: Structural recommendations due in nine months.

Step #9

In concert with study of new approaches to mainstream systems (Step Five), develop: (a) creative concepts on employment of currently homeless and (b) a structure through 2010 for providing advice to mainstream system that evolves from Step Five. This group is singularly fixed on the goal of preparing homeless people for work and placing them in meaningful jobs – with all the ability and attitude considerations that go with that challenge.

Timing: Conceptual plan completed in one year, advisory responsibilities through 2010.

Step #10

Close offices of Philadelphia Committee to END Homelessness. Turn building into livable, affordable housing. Tell other cities how we did it.

Timing: 2010

The Philadelphia Committee to END Homelessness

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Philadelphians Who Have Been Homeless...

Speaking for Themselves

"...People still have dignity even if they don't have a place to live or a job to support themselves. A lot of people on the street are or were potential wage earners at one time or another, however, due to circumstances they have become trapped in a revolving door that does not allow for escape..."

"You are homeless not by choice... shelters are not the answer... housing and better employment opportunities are the only answer."

"To have a decent, modest job.
To have a decent, modest place to live of which I could afford.
These two things would help ease the hopeless feeling of what the next day will bring."

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Philadelphia Committee to End Homelessness